

Historic Survey
And
Recommendation of Eligibility
Report
for
Paw Paw, WV
Apple Orchard Industry

Prepared
By
Cacapon Preservation Solutions
July 2024

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Abstract

Cacapon Preservation Solutions was contracted by the Town of Paw Paw to research buildings associated with Paw Paw's once thriving Apple Orchard Industry and evaluate their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Four remaining resources (Consolidated Orchard Warehouse Packing Plant; the former Lark Inn; the one remaining Worker House; and the old Consolidated Distributors (Orchard) Headquarters building) were evaluated as part of this study, and Historic Property Inventory (HPI) forms completed. All four warrant consideration for eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places.

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Introduction

As part of ongoing efforts to identify, document, and nominate historic properties in Paw Paw to the National Register of Historic Places, Cacapon Preservation Solutions approached the Town of Paw Paw Town Council with a proposal to document the four remaining buildings associated with the town's former apple orchard industry. The agreed upon goal was to conduct research to justify seeking nominations as part of a follow-on effort.

Cacapon Preservation Solutions previously completed three nominations for resources in Paw Paw between September 2023 and June 2024 with all three being listed by the National Park Service (NPS) to the National Register of Historic Places. These resources are:

- 1893 Town Hall/Mayor's Office - 93 Lee Street, listed fall 2023
- Former 1876 St Charles Catholic Mission Church - Winchester St, listed spring 2024
- Former 1928 Paw Paw Black School - Amelia St, listed summer 2024

In addition, three other resources were previously studied and HPI forms submitted

- The Paw Paw Depot - Depot Street, MN-0247 (done by others)
- A Dwelling - 61 Cherry Lane, MN-0248 (done by others)
- Dr B.W. McBee I-House - 13 Ruth Bevans Ln (done by Cacapon Preservation Solutions)

Of these three resources the Paw Paw Depot was the only one assessed by SHPO to warrant the effort and expense of pursuing a nomination.

Project Area Description

Paw Paw, in Morgan County, is located along the Potomac River in an area known as the Paw Paw Bends. The Paw Paw Valley is surrounded by the ridges of Sideling Hill, Green Ridge, Purslane Mountain, and Town Hill. Henry W Miller Blvd (WV Route 9) runs North-South along the eastern edge of the town. The majority of the buildings within the town boundaries were constructed in the late 19th and early 20th century. The town is bisected east-west by the "highline" railroad cut undertaken in 1913-1914. The original lowline track was decommissioned in 1961 and the rails removed.

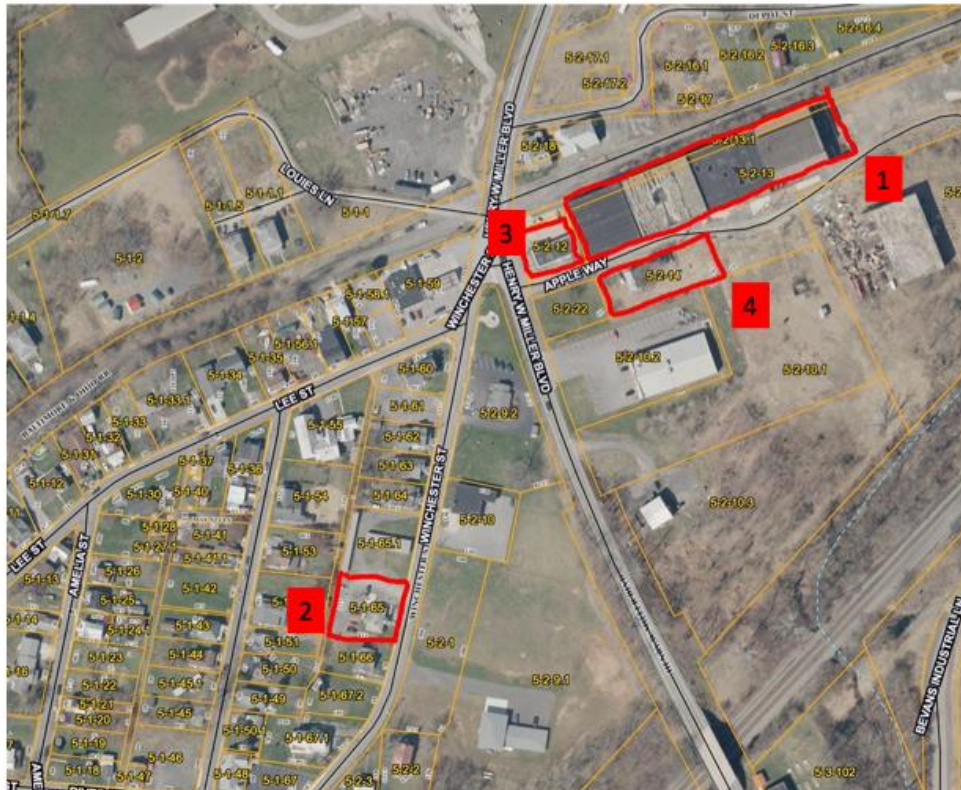
Project Documentation

This report summarizes the results of the identification, documentation and evaluation of four resources associated with Paw Paw's Apple Orchard Industry.

Research Methodology

The majority of research was conducted at the Paw Paw Library, the Morgan County Record Room, the Morgan Messenger's digital archives, and via personal interviews.

Survey Area



1. Consolidated Orchard Packing Plant (apple warehouse/cold storage)
2. Consolidated Distributors (Orchard) Corporate Headquarters
3. Lark Inn Restaurant (constructed/funded by principal owner of Consolidated Orchard)
4. Last remaining house of several on Apple Way used for worker housing – in very poor condition

Historic Context of Paw Paw and its Apple Orchard Industry

With the beginning of commercial navigation of the Potomac River in 1749 by fur traders of the Ohio Company, who traveled as far west as Cumberland, MD, land in the area of present day Paw Paw was settled by farmers and rivermen.¹ As additional settlers began arriving around 1800 in the immediate area of present day Paw Paw, a town began to emerge, and this growth accelerated in 1836 as the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company began work on the Paw Paw Tunnel directly across the Potomac River in Maryland.² Then two years later, in 1838, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad - constructing a rail line from Harpers Ferry to Cumberland, MD - reached the settlement. Shortly thereafter two general merchandise stores and a train depot (1845) were constructed.³

In 1846 the first Post Office was established with Isaac Baker as the first postmaster and the settlement was officially referred to as “Isaac Baker’s Store” or “Isaac Baker’s Depot”.⁴ Later the settlement was identified as “Paw Paw Tunnel”, eventually “Tunnel” was dropped and the area became simply known as “Paw Paw”.⁵

In 1894 three brothers came to Morgan and Hampshire counties to raise fruit (Henry W. “Harry” Miller, Gilbert P. “Gib” Miller, and L. Porter “Port” Miller) from Gerradstown, WV where their father had established the first commercial orchard in 1851.⁶ By 1910 there were more than 150 commercial orchards in Morgan and Hampshire counties.⁷ Per information from an old pamphlet on the Paw Paw Apple Industry, Henry Miller started his first orchard with several thousand peach trees. In 1910, a disease known as “The Yellows” wiped out most of the peach industry in the area and much of the eastern U.S., leading Henry Miller and his brothers to shift primarily to apples.⁸ Mr. H.W. Miller had established his orchard in Paw Paw in 1898 and in 1912 he and his brothers combined their orchards (Imperial Orchard, Allegany Orchard Co. and Martin’s Mountain Orchard Co.) into the Consolidated Orchard Company.⁹ In 1920, Consolidated built its first packing house.¹⁰ A 1919 census of orchards by the WV Department of Agriculture recorded eight orchards in Paw Paw, with an inventory of 68,700 apple trees and a crop of 32,200 barrels (nearly 105,000 bushels) of fruit.¹¹ While the area was known primarily

¹ Morgan County Historical & Genealogical Society, Berkeley Springs, WV, *Morgan County, WV and its People*, (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Co, 1981), 12.

² Morgan County Historical, *Morgan County*, 12.

³ Lewis Largent, “Historical Sketch of Paw Paw,” in *Once Upon a Time in Paw Paw*, ed. Janet Galliher and Vicki Sirbaugh (1997) n.p.

⁴ Morgan County Historical, *Morgan County*, 12.

⁵ Morgan County Historical, *Morgan County*, 12.

⁶ Morgan County Historical, *Morgan County*, 253.

⁷ Morgan County Historical, *Morgan County*, 253.

⁸ “Paw Paw Apple Industry” (excerpt from an old pamphlet), in *Once Upon a Time in Paw Paw*, ed. Janet Galliher and Vicki Sirbaugh (1997) n.p.

⁹ Kate Shunney, “When Paw Paw smelled like apples in the fall”, *The Morgan Messenger*, August 30, 2022.

¹⁰ Morgan County Historical, *Morgan County*, 13.

¹¹ Shunney, “When Paw Paw smelled like apples”.

for apples, there is record of at least one tomato canning factory in the early 1900's, established by Joseph P. Howermale, which was destroyed in an explosion and fire in 1917.¹²

The "Mountaineer" brand of apples, grown and packed by Consolidated, was patented in 1924. In 1928, Consolidated Distributors, Inc. was created to market Paw Paw's fruit around the world under several different labels including "Skip's Best Apples" (named after the packinghouse supervisor), and "Uncle Port's Apples", which was named for one of the Miller brothers.¹³ The company established its offices in Paw Paw for handling fruit produced locally by large and small producers.¹⁴ In addition to Consolidated, there were several other smaller companies and packing houses located in the area.¹⁵

In July 1939, the Consolidated Orchard Packing Plant burned down requiring the use of nearby packing plants to make it through the season. By 1940, a new modern packing plant was ready and capable of storing 130,000 bushels of apples. This plant was expanded over the years and by 1963 it had increased in size to allow for another 75,000 bushels.¹⁶

On April 16, 1948 Consolidated Orchard hosted the dedication of the B&O Railroad Paw Paw Pullman car. The car was assigned to the Capitol Limited route from Washington, DC to Chicago. B&O chose to dedicate a pullman car to honor "Paw Paw" because of the importance of Paw Paw as an apple producing center, and the prominence of Henry Miller, Jr as a producer, shipper, and an apple authority throughout the United States. The distinguished visitors were treated to dinner at a local restaurant (the Lark Inn).¹⁷ [Henry Miller, Jr had funded the construction of a new Lark Inn adjacent to the packing plant specifically to host dignitaries and business associates who came from across the globe to Paw Paw to do apple business.]

Mr. Henry W. Miller, Jr (1903-1977) carried on the family legacy and was known nationally and internationally for his innovations in growing, packing, and shipping fruit from Morgan County for 52 years.¹⁸ He realized the benefits of a stable labor force and adopted a profit-sharing plan for his employees.¹⁹ He was a member of the International Apple Association, Inc., served on its Board of Directors three different times, served as Chairman of the Board, was elected its treasurer, and then as its President.²⁰ Mr. Miller was a consultant to the Secretary of Agriculture

¹² Morgan County Historical, *Morgan County*, 13.

¹³ Shunney, "When Paw Paw smelled like apples".

¹⁴ Morgan County Historical, *Morgan County*, 13.

¹⁵ Morgan County Historical, *Morgan County*, 13.

¹⁶ Morgan County Historical, *Morgan County*, 253.

¹⁷ *Once Upon a Time in Paw Paw*.

¹⁸ "Henry W. Miller," <https://agriculture.wv.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/henrywmillersr.pdf>. Accessed 27 July 2024.

¹⁹ "Henry W. Miller"

²⁰ "Henry W. Miller"

during the Eisenhower administration, as well as advisor to the Secretary of Commerce during the Nixon administration.²¹

In 1976, Consolidated was sold to a group of investors from New York and California and the management shifted to San Francisco. At the time, the company was producing well over 550,000 bushels of apples annually and could store nearly 325,000 bushels in refrigerated and controlled buildings. The company employed 85-90 workers year-round in the orchards and the packing houses, with the number of employees growing to more than 200 during the harvest season.²²

The orchard industry in Paw Paw came to an abrupt end after the severe election day flooding in November 1985 when the Potomac River crested in Paw Paw at 54 feet, nearly 29 feet above flood stage.²³ At the time, the packing plants were full of apples having just finished the picking season wiping out an entire year's crop.

²¹ "Henry W. Miller"

²² Morgan County Historical, *Morgan County*, 253.

²³ Ed Bruske, et al, "Floods Cause 26 Deaths, Heavy Damage in Region", *The Washington Post*. November 6, 1985. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1985/11/06/floods-cause-26-deaths-heavy-damage-in-region/ea7cf865-d41e-4617-975d-c3b60ec720a0/>. Accessed July 27, 2024.

Recommendation

After each building was documented with individual HPI forms, they were evaluated using the National Register Criteria of Evaluation to determine if they met the minimum eligibility requirements for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Each building was evaluated using the Four Criteria of Eligibility:

- Criterion A: That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- Criterion B: That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- Criterion C: That embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- Criterion D: That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Each building was then assessed using the seven aspects of integrity

- Location
- Setting
- Workmanship
- Material
- Design
- Feeling
- Association

Integrity is the ability or a property to convey its significance.

Based on the fieldwork, documentary research, and the NRHP criteria, three of the buildings are recommended individually eligible for listing in the NRHP with the fourth (Worker House) recommended eligible as a “dependency” to the Packing Plant.

Historic Property Inventory Forms are included in the appendix.

Note: All recommendations of eligibility must be verified by the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The SHPO determines the final eligibility of historic resources. Based on their determination SHPO will recommend whether or not the integrity of the resource is worthy of the effort and expense of completing a nomination form. Upon submission of a nomination SHPO will decide whether or not to submit to the WV Archives and History Commission for their endorsement and transmittal to the National Park Service and Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places for final approval and listing.

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Appendix: HPI Forms